THEOLOGY

VOL. XLVI MARCH, 1943 No. 273

Reflections of a Post-War Ordinand

AFTER the war it is likely that with fewer priests the Church will be expected to do better work than it has ever done. This will demand closer concentration by the clergy upon the proper work of the priesthood and an equally determined exertion by the laity in the manifold works of witness. I believe that the former must always precede the latter, both to create and to sustain it. Departure from this principle has only the attractions of the indefinite short cut.

First, I make a plea that arises from my memories of Knutsford. In making it I become even more conscious of the fact that to no other set of human relationships do I owe as much as I owe to Knutsford. Then I shall make suggestions which I believe to be founded on the fact that in the Church of England and her Book of Common Prayer we have instruments for the unfolding of divine truth which for beauty, adequacy and sensitiveness have not their equal in Christendom.

In 1919 there was panic about the shortage of parsons. The wealthier parishes were determined to be full-staffed as soon as possible, and though in their efforts to gain this end they were bound to help their poorer brethren, I do not believe that the distribution of priest-power was any more equal than the training itself. Knutsford made the major contribution to the relief of the situation, but fear of being too late falsified the sense of urgency which penetrated even that abandoned stronghold.

Most of us had once earned our livings and we were anxious to do so again; bishops and incumbents were eager to expedite our speed; many of us were swept off our feet by our first experience of what the Holy Spirit can do in a rightly directed close-knit corporation. Nevertheless, a subtle hot wind blew in from somewhere and spread a kind of confidence that whatever the "new clergy" might lack in knowledge, training, spiritual discipline and priestly equipment, would be more than covered by the spirit in which they would tackle their job. I have since learned that the teaching staffs, both at Knutsford and in theological colleges, fought a spirited rearguard action in this matter, but episcopal cars were often seen picking up men who had missed the bus.

If, as I hope, there is to be another Knutsford after this war, may I ask that there be a little more grim imported into the gay, that there be no more shortened courses, that nothing be allowed to take the place of study and discipline in the specialized things of theology and the devout life? The demands the world will make upon the priests of the future will be heaviest at the point of the spiritual life and the knowledge of divine truth. Knutsford doubtless got the Church round an awkward corner, so that the mousy curate, even on the stage, is wellnigh unintelligible to this generation, but the popular notion that "there must be something in the Gospel because broad-minded and full-blooded

Mr Boxer supports it" is probably more intolerable. Heartiness is not enough.

I am not myself learned enough to know what should happen to men in their training period in colleges; I do not wish to make any comment about the Interim Report on the Training of the Ministry, for I am not qualified to do so; but I must do my best to emphasize that the apparent benefits of short courses and easy examinations were really a mirage. But in regard to the post-ordination training of a priest I hope that my reflections will be less amateurish.

We have worked too hard the alleged analogy between the clerical and the teaching professions, and we must find another. The school teacher not only works for many years as a member of a team under direct supervision, but even when he is given the responsibility of being a head teacher he must spend the rest of his life under the hand of the L.E.A. and the eye of H.M.I. The analogy I would suggest is that of the medical profession. A deacon and a priest in his first year is like a medical student who goes into hospital for final training in both theory and practice. He is not yet a doctor and none may give him the responsibilities of a practitioner. I think that this analogy would work out along the lines suggested in what follows.

1. Deacons should be licensed to the bishop of the diocese until the end of the first year of priesthood and stipends should be a charge upon diocesan funds. In this matter the bishop must really be Father in God and his junior clergy his sons, particularly in the matter of the movability of a deacon from a parish wrongly chosen. Errors under this new plan would not be more numerous than under the old, and they would be much more easily remedied. Nothing can ever guard against fundamental frivolity, and we should aim at frankness and fellowship. A scheme so weak that it must block every bolt-hole of individual idiosyncrasy would leave too little room for the Holy Spirit to work.

2. The vicar of a parish to whom a deacon is posted must be apt to teach all he knows of the work of the ministry, eager to maintain such a system of devotional life as will follow reasonably upon that of a theological college, and big enough in heart and mind to appreciate zeal and direct enthusiasm. Here, if anything like the Interim Report be put into effect, will be need for grace abounding.

3. The parish must be one in which there is grave care in all matters pertaining to the performance of public worship. In the past it has been too readily assumed that deacons do not need meticulous training in the use of the voice, their manners, movements and personal behaviour in church. The priest is an interpreter of God, and the whole of his personality is a sacrament of truth and beauty. Should he introduce ugliness of any sort he hurts not himself but the God of whom he is the sacrament and the people to whom he crudely interprets. The world clamours for the services of the Church to be made intelligible to this generation. The answer does not lie in messing about with the book the people hold in their hands, but in the most careful attention to the beauty, precision, dignity and workmanship which are required of those who conduct the services. Beauty is its own interpreter, if only we will give it a chance.

I was trained in a town parish with a great tradition, and I am therefore prone to exaggerate the value of good music and fine pomp, but I am aware that there are two sets of problems to be tackled and not only one. There cannot be too much care for beauty of expression, cleanliness, accuracy and efficiency. The people of this age may not have sufficient education to know much about art, drama, music, elocution, but even the films have given them a kind of a standard whereby to judge the performance of men who lead "public functions." They may not be able to say precisely why they are offended, but many people seem to be hurt in their souls when the chief actors in the performance of divine worship have not made effort enough to present their drama with the dignity it deserves. The parson who has most to say about his people being indifferent to religion is usually the one who is himself most slipshod in church. And this is a matter in which both High and Low Church clergymen are on common ground.

The beauty of the Liturgy we use in Common Prayer bestirs in those who use it as God's instrument a reverence that will destroy all falseness and affectation if we humbly study to master our craft and think more of it than of ourselves when doing it. Deacons must be brought to this devotion with the utmost care by one who is himself a master of the craft. It is only by this study that we shall learn how strangely unfaithful we have been to the genius of the village church. The Prayer Book was compiled when all men were country-minded and the townee was the exception to the rule. Recently we have given most of our attention to its interpretation to the mechanical-minded people of our cities, and from this point parsons have moved into the country to re-interpret to the country people. This tortuous and unnatural process has some far-reaching defects that could be remedied if some deacons were not trained in cities before they were allowed to exercise their true vocation as country parsons.

4. Deacons and junior priests should not be given "practitioners' responsibilities" by being put in charge of organizations. Far too often are young men fresh from college given responsibility for "Youth." This is bad husbandry. It sets fumblers to work where they can do most harm, it increases the exploitation of charm, and in view of the fact that young clergymen migrate much sooner than they used to do, the continuation between the junior and adult membership of the people they supervise is put in jeopardy at its unsafest period. This is a major cause of the leakage of adolescents and England is crowded with curates' pets.

5. A deacon, then, not being tied to the control of particular organizations, should be encouraged to make experiments under guidance, and be taught the routine work of parish management. (It is amazing how little the young chaplains to the forces know about the laws of marriage and a hundred other things "which the vicar always did.") In these experiments both the vicar and the deacon would discover strong and weak points. If there be failure in any section, it will not mean collapse of a piece of work important in the parish because a young man was left too long to struggle with the wrong job. Moreover, emphasis would thus be shifted from the deacon's sense of

his own importance, and a state of balance established which would avert both the swollen head and the broody mind.

6. A deacon should get more opportunity to use his book knowledge. To him it is important. To the people it could be of great value in these days of brains trusts and slick thinking. In most parishes it is treated as "exam-stuff" which will soon lose its savour. This neglect reaches both forward into the later years of a priest's life and backward into the college in which the deacon retains personal contacts. Yet in most parishes to which deacons would be posted there are men and women hungry to study stuff that would be overwhelming in the pulpit, but they, as well as the older parsons, need to be convinced that the Church really means business when she talks about teaching. We have done so little about it that the general public thinks we have nothing to teach. Who could be better equipped for this work than the deacon? And who needs it most? Before 1914 visiting taught the deacon and the people to understand each other, but now factory work, emancipation of women, the decay of home life and a dozen other things limit visiting. New machinery must be devised to teach the deacon and the sidesman that, though they use different language, their inner conviction of divine truth is essentially the same. The rift at this point is a serious matter to the whole Church, and some sort of study-group method could be devised to close it. Deacons should be made to face it before they do much preaching.

7. At almost any cost, in money, in the use of lay-readers, or even in shortening our line for a time, deacons and junior priests should never be allowed to take charge of district or mission churches. They can become hotbeds of little-mindedness, double loyalties, ill-manners in the conduct of public worship, and general slipshoddery. Though their vitality and close-knit self-consciousness can be most admirably directed by men experienced in the ministry, yet this same local keenness can be the undoing of a man who, being too young in the priesthood, is set too soon to command an outpost in which valour and vanity are too much confused.

8. Ordination to the priesthood should be at the end of the year's diaconate. I know nothing about examinations, not even enough to say how much I like that part of the Bristol Scheme.[1]

9. At the end of the first complete year of priesthood a junior priest should be sent to college again for at least three months, at the charges of his own diocese. Whatever may happen to the theological colleges in the future, this second course should be taken in small groups. The junior priest should be intimately tutored back into the ordered life of devotion, into the disciplined use of books, into a deeper appreciation of the true genius of the Church and the effective vocation of the priesthood. It has never been sufficiently appreciated that after he leaves college a priest never has time enough to think out his own priesthood in relation to God, to the Church, and to himself. Such thinking needs a generous absolution from the pressures of time and money, the im-

[1] See *The Bristol Diocesan Junior Clergy Training Scheme*, obtainable from Diocesan Church House, 23, Great George Street, Bristol 1.

mediate availability of a very wise mentor, solitude in the companionship of equals, and the actual experience of at least a full year's round in the work of an active parish priest. I believe that the lack of such an opportunity for contemplation and adjustment is responsible for more dry, visionless and ineffective clergymen than any other single cause, and it does more harm to the extravert, who camouflages his secret panic by turning the church into a club for the hail-fellow-well-met, than it does to the introvert, who unhappily meanders through an accumulation of disappointments.

10. After this second period in college the priest would be considered ready for "practitioners' responsibility." Until he is finally appointed he should sacrifice matrimony to mobility and service.

This is a long-term plan, but if the Church is to direct the course of national life and world fellowship our lay-folk must be better trained to take their place as the living agents of God in the redemptive process. This cannot be done until their trainers, the priests of the Church, are more particularly fitted for their proper function. But neither can this be done until we have aroused the whole Church to a new conception of the vocation and value of the sacred ministry. Talking to our own parishioners will not enable this new vision, but a determined effort to remodel the training of parsons, not only in the colleges, but also at the point where they publicly make contact with the people in the parishes, will do much good. Complaints may come at first from parishes which have been used to having deacons as cheap labour in the vineyard, but after five years even they would discover that though they could not get any more apprentice labour for journeymen's jobs they could get a priest thoroughly trained to accept serious and heavy responsibility.

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Communication

Dr Oldham and others have recently been telling us that "all real life is meeting," and that much of the thought of the last 300 years has gone largely astray because it took as its starting-point the isolated individual as a thinking subject rather than recognizing his dependence on nature, his fellow-men and God. This view, if it is true, is plainly of fundamental importance. It may be of some interest to show how deeply rooted it is in the very nature of our experience. This paper attempts to deal with the question of communication at an elementary level. It is, perhaps, one of the jobs of philosophers to examine these elementary foundations which people for the most part take for granted. I hope that what I write at this elementary level may help towards elucidating some of the more important bearings of the truth in question. I have arrived at these conclusions by a different route from Dr Oldham—partly from my study of Professor A. N. Whitehead's philosophy and partly from my own attempt to find an answer for myself to the positivism which holds many of my contemporaries among the younger philosophers. What I want to urge is that thinking itself is

only possible on the basis of a pre-existing relatedness—that is to say, of communication.

This may seem at first sight very obvious. But it is one of those obvious things that weighty and influential thinkers have been able to question, at any rate, with the top of their minds. Descartes at the beginning of the seventeenth century in his famous *Cogito, ergo sum* made the mind of the individual thinker his starting-point. And not only Descartes, but a very strong and persistent tradition in philosophy, holds that, when we give an account of "experience," we must start from the thinking mind and its states, or from data provided by the senses, which data are in some sense mental experiences. Out of these the mind "constructs" a world of orderly experience by its own principles of procedure, or else it finds certain regularities of order in its ideas which enable it to make predictions as to future experiences on the ground of past experiences.

It is much easier to feel dissatisfied with views of this kind than to disprove them. Their strength lies in the fact that we can only be aware of anything in so far as it enters into our experience. We cannot compare something within experience with something outside it, because it is only in so far as what is outside comes within the field of our experience that we can be aware of it to do the comparing. Since experience is the experience of an individual person, if we describe it in terms of the states, ideas and sense data of that experiencing individual, it is difficult to see how it can give us real knowledge of what lies beyond itself. We can only by an act of faith "project" such ideas as "thing" or "cause" and try by this means to make sense of our experience. We have to assume by analogy that there exists a world of "things," connected with one another as cause and effect, and that certain peculiar patterns of sense data constitute human bodies, which on the analogy of our own minds and bodies are the habitations of other minds. If we start from our own processes of thinking, acting and willing, we are driven to this projection, which is a sort of animism, and have to argue by analogy that there are other things in a world outside of us which are activated by similar processes.

The comparison with animism is instructive. "Animism" is the term used by anthropologists to denote the theory that primitive man comes to the idea of himself as a soul (probably through the experience of dreams, where it seems as though his "soul" were going off and doing all sorts of things, while his body is asleep and immobile), and then projects this idea of a thinking or willing soul on the processes of nature round him, and comes to think of them also as manifestations of spiritual activities.

But the more recent tendency among anthropologists is, I gather, to look on this account of the primitive philosopher as altogether too sophisticated. They are inclined to think that the fundamental experience from which primitive man starts is not the consciousness of his own soul, which he projects on to the world outside, but what Dr Marett has called "pre-animism." This is a sense of his own functions and activities as continuous with those of the world about him, which is charged with mysterious powers interpenetrating his own life.

These powers are not clearly defined, still less personified, but the rhythms of nature, the seasons, animal and vegetable life are charged with them and they penetrate the life of the individual, so that he has at first no clear sense of himself as a "subject" standing over against nature. There is no sharp distinction between "I," "you" and "it," but rather a sense of an all-pervading living power which may assume various forms. A vague sense of *rapport* with a continuous life reaching beyond oneself comes before a sense of personal identity, and certainly before the power of abstract thought. Primitive languages are poor in abstract words, such as adverbs and prepositions, which can be used like counters to express a similar relation in different contexts, but are rich in concrete words, expressing the feeling of a total complex situation in which one is involved with others. A good example is the lovely Fuegian word *mamihltapinatapai*, which means "two-people-looking-at-one - another - each - hoping - that - the - other - will - offer - to - do - something - which - both - parties - desire - but - are - unwilling - to -do." To have achieved a word to express this only too familiar situation makes us think that primitive man can't be such a fool as he looks. But the point I want to stress is that such words express an essentially *relational* way of thinking. They start, that is to say, from a sense of *rapport* or of conflict within a total situation in which others are involved as well as oneself, and seek to give it precise expression.

I would suggest that something like this is the fundamental form of experience from which we all start. The idea that we begin by thinking of ourselves as conscious "subjects" entertaining ideas, which we then project on to a world beyond ourselves, is too sophisticated as an analysis of our primary experience. We start from a sense of interconnexions, and become conscious of ourselves through the ways in which we respond to influences reaching us from the world beyond us. This impact of the world around us reaches us primarily, if not entirely, through our bodies, which are after all just that part of the environment with which our minds have a peculiarly intimate connexion. Just what to make of the physical senses, the brain and the nervous system is a hard nut to crack for logical positivists and phenomenalists, who would reduce the world to patterns of sense data.

How the feelings mediated through the body and nervous system become interpreted by the mind in terms of sensations and ideas is part of the whole problem of the relation of body and mind, to which there exists, in my opinion, as yet no satisfactory solution. Perhaps all that we can do at present is to recognize that somehow this does happen. The mind can take up cues from the physiological and nervous reactions of the body and transmute them into ideas conveying meaning. "Meaning" cannot be accounted for in terms of physical and nervous reactions alone, as any competent criticism of behaviourism will show. But unless I were in *rapport* through my body with a surrounding world, I should not be able at all to build up my world of perception and ideas containing meaning. The fundamental condition for experience, therefore, is the feeling of response to processes impinging on one.

This is what Professor A. N. Whitehead has in mind when he describes each real thing in the world as a "concrescence of prehensions."

By "prehension" he means the relation of one thing to another by which both are grasped together, like the monkey on the branch with its prehensile tail. The thing grasped is included in the relation. The experiencing centre is not, however, simply the resultant of its reactions to other things, but a "concrescence"—that is, a growing together of a new being, arising out of its response to what it "prehends." The difficulty of Whitehead's thought is due in part to the fact that he is trying to express this fundamental stage of experience prior to the sharp distinction between subject and object.

We have thus a fundamental, if rudimentary, kind of communication at the base of all our experience. Without these feelings of ourselves as arising out of a surrounding nature organically related to our bodies we should not be able to build up a world of meaning, interpreted in terms of conscious perceptions and ideas. It is true that these interpretations are not in the least *like* the physiological and neural processes which give us our clues. Nor have we any reason to suppose that the visual world of colours and shapes which we consciously see is in the least *like* the world of actual physical events; in fact, we have very good reasons for supposing that it is not. The world we see is a world in which the stimuli that come through the body are interpreted through various symbols that depend on the forms of our thinking, and these are then referred to physical events. But we have no warrant for supposing that the symbols are *copies* or representations of the things to which they refer. We believe them to be valid as symbols, partly because they enable us to respond to the world beyond in ways that are not disastrous, and partly because they prove themselves capable of building up a world of meaning shared by other minds and corroborated in communication with them.

This brings us to the second sense of communication as the necessary condition of arriving at meaning. It is questionable whether we can attach any meaning to "meaning" apart from communication. "Meaning" depends on our being able to express ourselves in language or other symbols, and on our symbols being understood by others within some agreed or presupposed context. The ways in which we seek to "verify" our ideas demand communication with other minds. If we talk about verifying something by observation in a laboratory, we do not mean just reporting the sense impressions of any chance observer. These may be highly misleading. "Verification" depends on comparing results obtained by trained observers. So "Do you see what I see?" is a pertinent question in situations besides those particular ones in which it is generally supposed to be asked. Exact observation presupposes very special skilled techniques acquired through the practice of a highly developed scientific tradition. Such skill has something of the nature of a craft passed on through personal training under practitioners of the tradition, and if the continuity of this tradition were destroyed the techniques of exact observation could not easily be recovered. It may also depend on the use of delicate and precise instruments and so on the inventors and makers of these instruments. So at every point verification by the senses in any exact sense depends on the observer's relation with a considerable number of other people and

their work. That they fail to recognize this can be brought forward as a criticism of the logical positivists' conception. Moreover, even in humbler matters than scientific experiment, "seeing is believing" is only a half-truth. Here is a simple illustration. A lady of my acquaintance was driving in a car past a lake near Manchester and saw a pink flamingo on the bank. She funked asking the other occupants of the car to let her go and look again in case they thought she was "seeing things." But later on she mentioned it to a naturalist friend, who said, "Oh, yes, you do occasionally get a few down there at this time of year." That bit of coherence with someone else's knowledge made her feel much more confidence than if she had gone back and had a still stronger personal sense impression of seeing a pink flamingo.

Meaning and verification are thus never purely private affairs; they are gradually built up and sustained through communication between minds. We do not start, as some over-sophisticated philosophers think, from our own thinking and arrive by analogy at the conclusion that there must be other minds, but our response to other minds in meaningful discourse is the condition of our being able to think coherently at all.

Plato recognized this when he described thinking as "dialectic"—that is to say, as the sustaining of a dialogue in which each party tries to meet the considerations, arguments and objections brought forward by the other. Even solitary thinking he described, not just as though it were straightforward calculation,[1] but as a "dialogue of the soul within itself," in which one has, as it were, to take both sides in the dialogue, and raise and try to meet one's own questions. But the most fruitful kind of thinking, he holds, is found when one mind is trying to meet the challenge in the thoughts of another (*cp.* the Seventh Letter 344*b*, which is probably authentic, "After practising detailed comparisons of names and definitions and visual and other sense-perceptions, after scrutinizing them in benevolent disputation by the use of question and answer without jealousy, at last in a flash understanding of each blazes up "). In any case, even sustained solitary thinking is impossible apart from a world of meanings embodied in language, which is the product of a long tradition of social intercourse. This remains true even when the thinking in question is a radical challenge to traditional meanings.

I hope I have said enough to show that the condition of any kind of meaningful experience is *rapport* with the world of nature and communication with other minds. But I have also urged that communication is not direct apprehension either of the physical world or of other minds as they are in themselves. It is rather a *response* in which we interpret the impact of the other upon us. We cannot say that the physical world as we perceive it is that world as it is in itself, but nevertheless we can only perceive it at all because of its action upon us through our bodies. So also we can only speak and think coherently because we are responding to the impact of other minds on our own,

[1] If thinking were only calculation, we could probably in the end devise sufficiently ingenious machines to do it for us. The Physics Department of the University of Manchester possesses a machine which can solve differential equations.

but we know these minds only through our responses to the ways in which they express themselves, and not directly in their own inner nature. Hence the difficulty in getting profound insight into other minds. We only know anything about the inner side of the experience of others in so far as they are successful in expressing it, and in so far as we are sensitive in responding to those clues which their ways of expression give us.

Perhaps if we were to come to what we mean by knowledge of God or of ultimate reality, we should find that something of this kind holds true here also, though to do more than merely indicate how such an approach might be developed would be beyond the scope of this paper. Such knowledge would only be possible because of an actual relatedness in which we stand, whether we like it or not. Yet our thought would depend on forms of interpretation and symbols built up by our minds according to the ways in which we responded to that relatedness. The symbols and ideas which we formulated might not be *like* the inner nature of the reality (indeed, if we take the thought of its transcendence seriously, they hardly could be), any more than our forms of perception are *like* the events of the physical world. But the latter are constructed as inevitable ways of responding to its stimuli. In the case of the religious symbols this sense of inevitability is much harder to come by, since the scope for imaginative creation is so vastly greater, and the modes of impingement of the reality upon us through our minds and wills are subtler than the clues as to the nature of the physical world mediated through the bodily senses. But the symbols are fruitful in so far as they have been born out of responses people have felt impelled to make when they have believed that reality has impinged upon them in some significant way. Hence the abiding value of the biblical symbol of the "Word," standing for a moment of "communication" prior to objectification in ideas. But to consider this would be a longer task beyond the scope of this paper.

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"Little Gidding"

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us—a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death.

Perhaps one of the best examples of the symbol of defeat perfected in death is Bossuet's text in the Oraison Funèbre on Marie Thérèse, Queen of Louis XIV. An unfortunate nonentity, overshadowed by his mistresses, Louis mourned her with "she never gave me a moment's trouble." And Bossuet chose for his text "A lamb without stain." She was an ineffectual, good, simple woman, whose significance could not be seen till her death, when the completed pattern of a life of patience emerged: the pathos that it would have been insulting to dwell on in her life placed her far above the splendid court, and should have shamed them all.

Little Gidding[1] is symbolic in this fundamental sense: not through complication of overlaid meanings, but through a refinement of discipline issuing in consummation:

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything). . . .

Much of the material is familiar from earlier poems, but it is used in a new way. Though this poem completes the series beginning with *Burnt Norton*, there is a distinctive tone and accent, and a distinctive quality in the vocabulary. The note of striving and seeking is replaced by certitude. At first, the verse strikes toneless and cold compared with, *e.g.*, the "wounded surgeon" passage in *East Coker*; but on re-reading, the peculiar precision defining with the particularity of a frost, the colourless clarity which is the last reward of disciplined integrity, penetrates at a deeper level—the level of "the terrible crystal," of the final chorus of Milton's *Samson*.

The poem is in five sections: two contrasted visions, a meditative passage, an apocalyptic lyric, and a conclusion.

The first twenty lines are prelude and epitome: the dazzle of frosty mid-winter noon is the paradox of the nadir, "suspended in time between pole and tropic;" a midwinter spring, "but not in time's covenant." That strange consolation found only at the centre of loss is here marvellously rendered in terms of the frosty blossoming of the hedges. And this experience is also the central experience of Christian life. Mr Eliot has never concerned himself in his poetry with dogma, but with experience: not with the Truth, but the Way. He has invoked not the creed but the liturgy, not the theologian but the contemplative. And in Little Gidding, which emerges as the end of the journey, it was a way of life that was practised. Here are no questions of intellectual concepts, but of a mode of living:

> You are not here to verify,
> Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
> Or carry report. You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid.

"I believe in the communion of saints" is dramatized, where the dead speak to the living, and there is the "intersection of the timeless moment." (It is an article of the Christian belief which must to the non-Christian appear not so much unacceptable as meaningless.) The poet stands here in the relation to the theologian that the love-poet does to the psychologist: he presents and defines an experience both highly personal—as to everyone there is a personal and unique apprehension given—and also genuinely representative.[2] And whilst the religious apprehension is given directly, as experience, the relating and

[1] *Little Gidding*, by T. S. Eliot. Faber and Faber. 1s.

[2] The poet, whether of religion or of love, conveys an experience to those who have not directly had it, by relating it to what they do know. There is a sense in which he who has not known love is handicapped in reading *Songs and Sonets* more than in reading Freud: yet the poems are also an *éducation sentimentale*. Similarly, a non-Christian may in reading Christian verse get very much nearer to what it feels like to be a Christian than he could otherwise do.

placing, the very highly organized integration, is a matter of the secular context, whether that be daily living or the language of philosophy.

For Eliot does on occasion use philosophy for poetic ends. Christianity is the main vehicle by which European thought has harnessed philosophy to work directly on the refinement of daily living. And it is in the work of great Christian writers, of Dante, Pascal,[1] the company of seventeenth-century mystics and divines who are echoed so subtly throughout the poem, that the delicate art of interpretation is achieved —as Eliot says, not by indifference, not theoretically, but with the full incarnation of the Here and Now, the precision of sensitive life.

The second section gives in dead, echoing monotone the vision of London under fire. Death, suffering, the sense of emptiness and shock that follow a vast catastrophe are not directly invoked: they are *suggested* in terms of a rhythm heavy, yet somehow also serene:

> Ash on an old man's sleeve
> Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.
> Dust in the air suspended
> Marks the place where a story ended. . . .

The strange stillness of bereavement hangs over these stanzas and over the suspended cadences of the dawn scene,[2] where in the blitzed street the form of the "familiar compound ghost" drifts with the dawn wind, a poet came from purgatory to revisit a world not dissimilar:

> After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
> Had passed below the horizon of his homing.

(These lines do not seem to me very happy. The conceit has too fabricated an air and its purpose in pointing forward to the fourth section is too obtrusive.)

The ghost states in words quite glacial in their precision the special sufferings reserved for poets in their age:

> First, the cold friction of expiring sense. . . .
> And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
> Of all that you have done, and been. . . .

With a final word, recalling that particular dead master, Arnaut Daniel, whose phrases Eliot has used so often, he speaks of the suffering spirit as being restored by "refining fire"; and so, like Hamlet's father, "faded on the blowing of the horn."

The third section relates these visions of the past and the present, Little Gidding and the blitz, prayer and the craft of verse. They are related through that detachment[3] which alone perceives the pattern binding them. Eliot begins by defining detachment, as distinct from

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[1] How far *Le Mémorial* is behind *Little Gidding* is perhaps unsafe to speculate. It is certainly highly relevant.

[2] Readers of Eliot will be reminded here of *The Waste Land*, as in the preceding section of *A Song for Simeon*.

[3] In THEOLOGY for February, 1942, I dwelt at some length upon Eliot's use of this theme: see "The Latest Verse of T. S. Eliot," *loc. cit.*

attachment and indifference. Memory is the servant of detachment, liberating the spirit through co-ordinating its experiences:

> Not less of love, but expanding
> Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
> From the future as well as the past.

(A significant variation upon the praise of detachment in *East Coker:* "I said to my soul, Be still and wait without hope. . . .")

So if history is seen detachedly, "history may be freedom." And though the past as it was embodied at Little Gidding cannot be revived, we inherit from both victors and vanquished in those wars. So, too, in turn, if we achieve detachment by the purification of the motive behind our petitions and prayers, we may transmit our best to others:

> And all shall be well and
> All manner of thing shall be well
> By the purification of the motive
> In the ground of our beseeching.

The fourth section—two short rhyming verses—is the poem's focus. It is an apocalyptic vision in which the descent of the Spirit in tongues of flame is blazoned upon a field of fire which is at once burning London, the shirt of flame and deifying funeral pyre of a dying Herakles, and the purgatorial fire of Arnaut Daniel. The fire of agony is seen, as all see it in moments of insight, as Hopkins' nun saw it in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, as the flame of that Person to whom Love is appropriated as His title.

> Who then devised the torment? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame
> Which human power cannot remove.
> We only live, only suspire,
> Consumed by either fire or fire.

The ringing vowels, *a*'s and *i*'s, which clang over the tolling *o*'s, both excite and bind the feeling which flows up from the complex images resolved in the symbol of fire. As a technical performance it is astonishing. But there is no sense of its being merely a technical performance: nor is "the incandescent terror" merely emotional. It is a triumph of a more elemental kind: all that is not sensuous is spiritual, and the sensuous is completely informed as the vehicle of the spiritual:

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything). . . .

The conclusion recalls old themes: it is a conclusion to the whole series. The seamless web, only perceived when it is completed; the pattern of words, of lives, of events in history—these have all been illustrated in the preceding sections and in the preceding poems. "History," says Eliot, "is a pattern of timeless moments"—the significant moments which redeem it from being a succession of events, and

give life to a nation or a civilization.[1] In the life of a person, his self-discipline may lead him back to his earliest intimations, and Man himself return to the primal garden, when the fire becomes a crown, the thorn a rose, and purgation blends into beatitude.

It will be seen that the theme of this poem is related to the earlier verse and yet that the certainty, the finality of precision is new. The measure of the suffering, which is given in spiritual terms—there are no atrocity close-ups, there is not even a suggestion of any delimited event—is the measure of the integrity and the power needed to present it. *Little Gidding* provides both a standard and a tool for inner reflection on the times. It was a great opportunity worthily met.

London. M. C. Bradbrook.

"The Final Decision about Ordination"

Communicated

The Archbishops' Commission on Training for the Ministry declares in the opening chapter of its Interim Report that "we are, of course, aware that the final decision about Ordination rests with the Bishop." Does this imply, as Episcopal practice seems to suggest, the claim that the *sole* decision whether to ordain a man or not rests with him? It is all-important to safeguard the Catholic rights of the Bishop, but there are surely some functions belonging to the whole body of the Church which should not be delegated to any official, however reverend his office. The Bishop alone can convey Holy Order; it is also generally conceded that he has the right to refuse any candidate without being called upon to give reasons for his refusal. But difficult issues are raised when, as not infrequently happens, a Bishop, moved by benevolence, admits a man to Holy Orders against the judgment of his Examining Chaplains, or without submitting the man to any examination other than the formal presentation of an essay, or excuses him from G.O.E., on the ground that "the final decision rests with the Bishop." The claim to do this requires closer examination than it has yet received.

The early Church followed the scriptural precedent of Acts vi, where the choice of deacons is made by "the multitude" and the laying on of hands is performed by the Apostles, and for six centuries the deacons were elected by the "people"—*i.e.*, the whole body of the Church. This seems to have been the practice of both East and West for the first six centuries; afterwards it was modified to the extent that the "multitude" were given the power of veto against the ordination of any candidate. In the Anglican Ordinal the Bishop invites a veto in the solemn formula, "Good people, if there be any of you who knoweth any impediment," etc. In the event of an impediment being raised, could the Bishop proceed to ordain on his own authority, as having "the final right of decision"?

[1] *Cf.* the definition by Eliot of tradition in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (*Selected Essays*, 1931).

For the first six centuries also, the Bishop ordained to the priesthood only with the consent of the Presbyterate, or council of local clergy. What is believed to have been the universal procedure of the early Church is summed up in the words of the Fourth Council of Carthage, quoted by Pellicia in his *Polity of the Christian Church* (Book 1, Sec. 2): "Episcopus sine concilio clericorum clericos non ordinet, ita ut civium conniventiam et testimonium requirat." The Bishop as a Father in God acted in collaboration with the whole Christian family and by the *civium conniventia* and *consensus clericorum* the organized community shared in an action which was the concern of the whole.

Our Ordinal requires the Archdeacon to testify in the presence of the congregation that he has inquired of the candidates (*de eis*), and also examined them, and considers them fit persons to be admitted to Orders. If the Bishop is about to ordain a candidate without examination by the Examining Chaplains, or even against their judgment, ought the Archdeacon, as senior Examining Chaplain, to be required to make this declaration? The candidate may be practically unknown to him. The Bishop who ordains solely on his own "final decision" ought surely himself to declare to the congregation his personal responsibility for the fitness of the candidate.

The laying on of hands by "the priests present" does not convey Holy Order, but it has a meaning; it signifies the consent of the Presbyterate to the ordination and seals it as an act of the whole body.

This question is of more than academic importance, primarily in view of the maintenance of the standard of the ministry, and particularly so during the rush of ordinations after the war. The mere passing of G.O.E. cannot be held to satisfy the intention of the Ordinal or to acquit Examining Chaplains of their responsibilities; G.O.E. is purely a criterion of "learning" and in no sense a guarantee of "godly conversation," for the examiners have no personal knowledge of the hundreds of candidates whose papers they read.

There is an uneasy, but not ill-founded, suspicion that, in some cases where kindness of heart has prevailed over prudence, the consequences of the exercise of Episcopal discretion have been unfortunate for the Church.

A secondary consideration is the defence of our position as against that of Presbyterians and Nonconformists, who are opposed to what seem to them the autocratic claims of the Episcopate.

It is greatly to be desired that the history of the subject, and its theological implications, could be carefully studied so that the Anglican position could be made clear.

Theological Literature Association

RATHER more than a year ago a "Theological Literature Association" was formed to stimulate the provision and circulation of the several categories of literature designed to further Christian faith and practice. The interest of a number of leading theologians at the

universities, of some distinguished lay apologists, and of others, was enlisted, and, despite the difficulties of the times, it has been possible to take initial steps towards the preparation of some important books. It is felt that the time is now come for making the existence of the Association and its objects more widely known. At present it consists of a Council of about forty members, of whom the following are serving as the Executive Committee: The Dean of Christ Church (Chairman), Professor C. H. Dodd (Vice-chairman), Professor C. E. Raven, Canon F. A. Cockin, Mr W. G. Symons, Dr Norman Sykes, Fr Victor White, O.P., Dr Newton Flew, with Dr F. L. Cross (Pusey House, Oxford) and the Rev. A. R. Vidler (St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, Chester) as Hon Secretaries. The Committee is anxious both to learn of any whose purposes or interests would lead them to wish to be kept in contact with the work of the Association, and also to receive suggestions as to tasks in which the services of the Association would be likely to be of use. A leaflet giving further particulars will be gladly sent to anyone who applies to either of the Hon. Secretaries.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE COMMON LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. By L. S. Thornton, C.R. Dacre Press. 30s.

This is one of the books for which we have been waiting. It is a solid and finely sustained essay in constructive biblical theology. It is a big book (470 pages of close print), and highly priced, but it is worth more than a dozen of the little books, of which there is a superfluity.

Fr Thornton explains how, after writing *The Incarnate Lord*, in which he sought to relate the Gospel to current philosophy, he found himself confronted by the question: "What if the Gospel becomes obscured by our presuppositions and preoccupations, so that we neither see the scope of its application nor suffer it to speak for itself?" He set about this fresh inquiry with the same thoroughness as before, and we believe that its results will be of direct benefit to a much larger body of readers. It is probably true to say that *The Incarnate Lord* is a book that has been a great deal more admired than read; students of theology will have no excuse for treating the present book in that way.

It might be described as an extensive and comprehensive commentary on Acts ii, 42, and in particular on the implications of the term *koinonia* in the New Testament. Fr Thornton sets out from the four marks of the Church as they are defined at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, and in order to elucidate their meaning is led from one passage in the New Testament to another, and indeed in the Old Testament too, until there is scarcely an aspect of the biblical doctrine of the Church that has not been touched on. His methodology is as significant as his conclusions. The book is a continuous illustration of the truth that the Bible is its own interpreter—*i.e.*, that, if it is allowed to speak for itself, the unity and coherence of its theme, for all the various forms

of thought that it uses, become manifest. Fundamentally, the writers are all saying the same thing.

"Criticism rightly elucidates differences between the individual authors of the sacred books. These differences must be recognized and allowed for; they must not be submerged in a forced and artificial unity. Yet the Scriptures are also like an orchestra. The peculiarities of individual contributions are balanced by a higher unity pervading the whole. God Himself has spoken, and His message is fundamentally one." Of course this has often been said, but it is not often, at any rate since biblical theology became critical, that the assertion has been so adequately corroborated by an actual demonstration. Passage upon passage, phrase upon phrase, word upon word, in the New Testament, when closely examined and brought into relation with one another, are shown to shine with the same light and to illuminate the same revelation.

The author keeps himself austerely to the work of exegesis, and makes no attempt to relate biblical doctrine to "modern thought," "contemporary issues," ecclesiastical definitions, or personal predilections. Only very occasionally does he permit himself to make a general reflection such as the following with reference to St Paul's experience at Athens: "In an educated but non-Christian community the Gospel seldom makes an appeal, in the first instance, to the intellectuals. For their developed presuppositions have been formed on the basis of enlightened self-interest with its restricted horizons. The Gospel cannot be fitted into such an outlook. The presuppositions must first be shattered." Or, again, the following with reference to the figure of Judas in the upper room: "When we contemplate that unhappy figure, we have to recall the fact that in all of us there is something of the traitor. We are Judas who betrayed, as well as Peter who denied. But by the mercy of God we are also 'the beloved disciple' who reclined on the breast of Jesus."

Of too many books it has been said that they ought to be on every clergyman's shelves; this is one of the books of which it may well be said. Only its price should be allowed to excuse its absence. It is not a book just to be read through; it supplies material and guidance for a year or more's daily study of the Bible. And after that it will invite constant reference for the sake of its exposition of particular texts. It shows up the need for more theological commentaries on the separate books of the Bible, and meanwhile affords generous provision for those who are sensible of the need.

There is a full index of references to Holy Scripture, which covers 16 pages. The index of subjects, on the other hand, is so meagre that it would have been better to omit it, if it could not be made more complete. We also think it would have been an advantage if the synopsis of the contents of each chapter, which is printed in the Table of Contents, had also been printed at the head of each several chapter; this would have obviated a certain abruptness in the transition from topic to topic. But these are trivial criticisms. It will be a sign of hope for English theology if the first edition of this book is soon sold out.

A. R. VIDLER.

HAWARDEN.

EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE IN ENGLAND FROM HOOKER TO WATERLAND. By C. W. Dugmore. S.P.C.K. 7s. 6d.

Mr Dugmore is to be congratulated upon the content and character of his Norrisian Prize Essay for 1940, and his publishers upon the enterprise which has made possible the publication in war-time of so useful, succinct and lucid a survey of Anglican Eucharistic doctrine during three centuries. The theme is admirably suited for an academic prize essay; it is a worthy subject, manageable in proportions, and the materials for its study are ready to hand. Moreover, a skilful treatment, such as Mr Dugmore has accorded, is serviceable to contemporary discussion. The book is a very sound essay in historical theology.

It may be observed further that the author gives a gratifying account of the ecclesiastical background to his theological survey, and is unusually well informed among writers of theology of the historical circumstances affecting the development of doctrine. His treatment of the subject is primarily historical, and to do justice to his work a review would need to indulge in a latitude of quotation impossible in war conditions. It must suffice to say that in the reviewer's opinion Mr Dugmore's quotations are representative and well proportioned. He examines the Eucharistic doctrine of the principal Anglican theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In the first two of these periods controversy with Puritan and Papist evoked and influenced the formulation of Anglican doctrine, and in the last Deism and its influence on such divines as Samuel Clarke and Hoadly presented new problems. Mr Dugmore discerns differences of emphasis and of belief between those whom he calls Central Churchmen and the High Churchmen of these centuries, and though the reader may differ in turn as to some of the classifications offered, the author's main standpoint is clear and acceptable. The views of Jewel and Hooker are out of fashion since the Tractarian revival, and even some of the Caroline divines share this disfavour. Mr Dugmore has done a useful service by pointing out the position of the sixteenth-century divines and by indicating the divergence of opinion among the Carolines.

Fundamentally the present reviewer is persuaded that Mr Dugmore is correct in believing that his survey leads to the establishment of the outlines of a position which the author calls that of the *via media*, and which distinguishes the Anglican doctrine from that of Papists and Puritans. The rejection of Transubstantiation is common to all the Anglicans of Mr Dugmore's survey, so is their rejection of the practice of elevation of the Sacrament. They are generally agreed that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is commemorative, not propitiatory, and that the real presence of Christ is sacramental and spiritual. Mr Dugmore is rather censorious of the prominent tendency in Anglican divines and doctrine to refuse a definition of the exact nature of this real presence, admitting it to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of reason, and in one place he permits himself in regard to the early seventeenth century a reference to "the intellectual bankruptcy of the leading churchmen of the day." Upon this point difference of opinion may perhaps be strong and legitimate. But this does not detract from the

value of Mr Dugmore's book. Marked by sound (and solid) learning, succinct and lucid in presentation, it constitutes a most useful introduction to the writers, more often written about than read, of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who contributed to the building up of a distinctively Anglican Eucharistic doctrine.

OXFORD. N. SYKES.

CHRISTIANITY, POLITICS AND POWER. By Gerhard Leibholz. Christian News-Letter Books, No. 15. Sheldon Press. 1s. 6d.

This book by Professor Leibholz, a German Lutheran layman and a distinguished scholar of law, is primarily ethical and partly historical; it does not aim at great religious or sociological profundities, but it reveals a great sensitiveness of Christian conscience in the face of some of the most important social problems of to-day, a sensitiveness which has been confined until now to a Christian minority, the majority being still in a somnolent condition. Professor Leibholz's main contention is that the Church has a positive message to the political consciousness of modern man, and must herself "be political, even highly political"; that "Christian faith is of incalculable political value." He views his subject mainly in connexion with the religious-political situation in Germany, where the relation of Church and State, of Church and politics, has become so tragically acute. With this in mind his call to Christians to bear an unflinching witness to the political relevance of the Church sounds both powerful and convincing. His thoughts on the "dialectical position of the Church" (viz., the tension between the necessity of realizing the Church's political mission and the awareness that no perfect Christian society can ever be achieved) and the great possibilities arising out of this position belong to the most valuable points made in the book.

Some of his statements will, no doubt, make certain modern theologians and sociologists, who belong in one sense or another to the neo-Calvinist trend of thought, shiver; but this is ultimately to be welcomed. Nevertheless, it is difficult to agree with Professor Leibholz's unconditional faith in the "eternal law of morality," in form, balance, reason and the virtues of the democratic West. And although in his historical characterization he points to the failures of Western civilization, yet he gives too optimistic a diagnosis of its spiritual condition, and seems to be altogether too much of an optimist.

I venture to make one or two other criticisms. One would have liked to find a more profound discussion of the relation between the individual and society. . . . As a Russian, I felt somewhat uneasy about the almost unqualified identification of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. I was also surprised at the recurring reference to the Orthodox Church (in connexion with the problem of power), which in Professor Leibholz's view conceives of power as a mere aberration of sinful instincts.

But these are only minor points. The book must be recommended especially to those who seek salvation to-day in an abstract and impotent nihilism in regard to the vocation of the Church on earth.

OXFORD. E. LAMPERT.

To Whom do Schools Belong? By W. O. Lester Smith. Blackwell. 8s. 6d.

Mr Lester Smith is much too modest about the valuable and significant book he has written. It is a war-time product in a more profound sense than in that of its incidental origin. The author tells us that the idea came to him during some wakeful nights in war-time winter, when he spent some waiting hours in looking over a file of notes on educational administration. But the grave issue with which the book deals had evidently been on his mind for a long time, and what now gives it such acute relevance is that prospect of far-reaching adjustments of internal government that we are now facing as a result of the upheavals of war.

We shall be wise if, with Mr Lester Smith, we set the question of the control of education right in the centre of that complex of problems. Though, in explicit form, the author raises only the issue of the "ownership" of schools, we are sure that he would agree that this is only part, though an important part, of the much wider question: Who is to control education? In other words—to put the issue both sharply and comprehensively—who is to have command of all those instruments and devices, now so powerful and subtle in their operation, by which the mind of a people may be shaped and the direction of its emotions determined?

It is strange that so momentous a question should still find the vast majority of us in a state of dangerous unawareness of things that belong so closely to our peace. It is less strange to those who, like Mr Lester Smith, know something of the past history of this matter of the control of education in England. His book is valuable in calling attention to just this: to a history the result of which leaves us not only largely unequipped to face the problem in its contemporary form, but so seriously unaware of its dimensions and lurking possibilities.

We are blind indeed to the significance of what has been happening in the world during the last dozen years or so if we think to escape the responsibility of a decision. Towards an understanding of the historical factors which will have to be taken into account in reaching a decision Mr Lester Smith makes a contribution that is of much greater value than his modesty permits him to realize. The core of his book consists of an account of that uneasy and characteristically English compromise which came to expression in the Act of 1870. How uneasy and precarious it was he shows by copious and well-chosen extracts from reports of the debates on Forster's famous Bill. The background upon which they throw some light is one of almost bewildering complexity and even confusion. It is not surprising that the compromise of 1870 should have lasted for no more than a generation, that the continuation and development of it by the Act of 1902 should have occasioned such bitter strife, and that we should be so little prepared to face the long-avoided issue in the form in which it faces us to-day.

The author leads up to his central chapters by a sketch of the preceding history, slight but effective, and follows with some account of the extension of the compromise to "higher" education in later years.

Very wisely he attempts no offer of any final solution, though he sees clearly, as we all ought to see, that we cannot much longer delay a decision, particularly a decision that will determine the part, inevitably great, to be played by the State.

The impression left by the book—let us acknowledge it—is that of a people deeply disunited on this question. The disunion was made possible and tolerable by national security and masked from time to time by compromises that were no more than the resultants of conflicting contemporary forces. Denominations divided against secularists and undenominationals, and divided among themselves; *laissez-faire* against the principle of State action; class and economic interest masquerading as educational principle; the poor as an accepted social category to be provided for by the "elementary" system, as also by the workhouse: the gentleman as another accepted category to be provided for beyond the reach of the State altogether—these are some of the elements of a chaotic-looking picture.

The danger now is either that of a clash which will only deepen confusion or of the supervening of a bureaucratic State system on something like totalitarian lines. We have to face it without the equipment of either a commonly accepted national philosophy of education or of an adequately written history to show us how our educational forms and ideas have been shaped by the intricate play of social and economic forces.

All such considerations do but serve to emphasize the value and timeliness of Mr Lester Smith's book. Few are so well qualified as he by training and long experience to register and record the play of the conflicting forces. Historians may question some of the details of his book, but that matters little and his modesty is all-disarming.

We can but re-echo his strongly expressed hope that the task of providing us at last with the adequate history which we need so sorely will now be taken seriously in hand.

F. Clarke.

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University of London.

SHORTER NOTICES

Thou must Venture. By E. L. Allen. Nisbet. 7s. 6d.

In his preface Dr Allen writes: "The theology which is developed here is not an interesting enquiry into religious problems, it is a communication from person to person"; and he describes the method of presentation he has chosen as that of initiating the reader into the process by which the results are reached. If this is not remembered, help which the book might have given may be missed.

Dr Allen is persistent in asking himself of every topic with which he deals: "To what in our ordinary experience shall we liken this?" And the book has grown as the answers accumulated. The result is thirty

short essays on a variety of subjects, grouped in three parts: The Gospel of God, The Gospel of Jesus Christ, and Ourselves and the Gospel. Several essays read as though they had first been prepared for speaking, and perhaps on that account there may be some whose best use of the book will be to read it aloud with one or two others and at the end of each paragraph ask themselves: "How does this seem to me?"

The book is a kind of *credo*, discontinuous, tantalizing, stimulating and sometimes baffling. Perhaps the author himself provides the best review when he writes: "Those, therefore, who like to be sure that nothing has been left out will be dissatisfied; those who prefer that nothing should be brought in that has not approved itself in experience will be able to understand." And as I read on there remained two topics of which I would have welcomed much more discussion, so as to bring out the way in which they had "approved themselves in experience" to the author. "We must meet Jesus Christ personally." Those are Dr Allen's words, and I could not see that he found them difficult or lacking in self-evidence (see pp. 39 and 121). That is one topic, and the other finds expression (though not explanation) in Chapter XIII: "When I see what Jesus has done for me, what can I do in return?" What has He done? And how do I see it? From Dr Allen's standpoint his readers deserve more than they get.

CAMBRIDGE. H. C. L. HEYWOOD.

THE STORY OF ST MARY ABBOTS, KENSINGTON. By Judith D. Guillum Scott. S.P.C.K. 5s.

Generously illustrated and meticulously annotated, this parochial history is a model of its kind. Miss Scott, who is Assistant Secretary of the Central Council for the Care of Churches, begins and ends with the parish itself: its history since Domesday (where it figures as *Chenesiton*), the grant of the existing church with a parcel of land to the Benedictine Abbey of St Mary at Abingdon in Berkshire at the end of the eleventh century, the dispute over the right of presentation (which had belonged to the Bishop of London since 1260) at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the carving out of the original parish of no less than twenty-nine new parishes between 1827 and 1904. But the main part of the work traces the history of the parish church of St Mary Abbots, its fabric, its "goods and ornaments," its monuments and memorials, its charities and schools, and finally its vicars, these latter including the learned Dr Jortin, Thomas Rennell the younger (whose brilliant promise was frustrated by his early death), Archdeacon Sinclair (in whose incumbency, and largely by whose efforts, the present church was built to the designs of Sir Gilbert Scott), Archbishop Maclagan, Bishop Carr-Glyn, and Canon Brook-Jackson, to whom Mr Sidney Dart in his autobiography, *Not Such a Bad Life*, pays a striking tribute. This admirable and singularly inexpensive volume is frankly richer in factual detail than in human interest; but we are glad to know about the curate (early nineteenth century) who, for reasons of health and comfort, conducted funerals from a sort of portable sentry box (p. 80), and about his predecessor (early sixteenth century) who was so very

mildly harried for possessing a copy of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and a Lutheran book (pp. 141-2), and about the Pest House in Gore Lane in 1665 (p. 127), and the ungodly profiteering in pews and sittings some thirty years later when the transformation of Nottingham House into Kensington Palace by King William III suddenly popularized the neighbourhood (p. 39), and the importance of the tithes of hot-house fruit to the vicar of Kensington at the end of the eighteenth century (p. 17).

CHARLES SMYTH.

CAMBRIDGE.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE FAILURE OF CIVILIZATIONS

MY DEAR EDITOR,

In his review of Dr Johnson's *The Social Gospel Re-examined* in your December issue, Mr Alex Miller makes a reference to me the meaning of which is somewhat obscure—to me, at least. May I, therefore, ask him if he denies that it is a Christian interest to indicate and define the biblical significance of the failure of successive civilizations to solve the human problem? Is it Mr Miller's idea that the Christian thinker must not use the fact of secular futility to awaken our generation to the primary biblical demand of unconditional surrender to the divine will? This is what Mr Miller seems, to me, to imply. I am honestly puzzled to understand how my theological procedure affords Dr Johnson or any other semi-Liberal any excuse for thinking that trust in human nature, however tenuous, can be reconciled with the biblical doctrine of God! Will Mr Miller please enlighten me, since I do not wish to be such a supreme fool as to strengthen what I am determined to destroy.

Yours, etc.

D. R. DAVIES.

9, DESMOND AVENUE,
HULL,
December 30, 1942.

The Rev. Alexander Miller writes:

Mr Davies knows how wholeheartedly I stand with him in his concern to "define the biblical significance of the failure of successive civilizations to solve the human problem." But the danger in some of his work, I think, is again indicated in his further suggestion that we must "use the fact of secular futility to awaken our generation to the primary biblical demand of unconditional surrender to the divine will." The questions which this raises in my mind are these:

(1) The failure of civilizations is after all a relative failure. They do not "solve the human problem," they do not even succeed fully in terms of their own pretensions, but they do achieve a certain approximation to justice. If their relative failure is used in Christian apologetic, the implication tends to be that a relatively more successful civilization would come relatively nearer to solving the human problem, whereas

the human problem is such that even a completely successful civilization could not solve it.

(2) If our secular futility is used to point the moral that we must surrender to God, it is easy to pass to the suggestion that the motive for surrender to God is that we may achieve secular success.

(3) I do not believe that we can use the failure of successive civilizations to give a kind of inverted proof of man's need of God, far less of the truth of Christianity. This is a kind of natural or empirical theology which is very tempting in times of secular crisis, but is invalid none the less.

(4) If we make it a Christian interest to prove that civilizations "run without God" always collapse, we encourage two related misunderstandings: first, that a civilization run by Christians who "let God in" would be more successful; and, second, that civilizations which do not openly acknowledge God are in fact not sustained by Him. I'd dispute the first on the ground that secular stability depends on technics as well as on good-will, and the second in the name of God's real Lordship even over the "secular" sphere.

(5) Christian judgment is perverted if we suggest that there is a certain level of relative justice above which a secular society cannot maintain itself. The implication sometimes is that the Christian cause is threatened if a secular society can demonstrate a certain measure of achievement, because the Gospel is rendered thereby less relevant and necessary. I think that Russia's name is sometimes blackened unnecessarily by well-meaning Christian apologists who have an unwholesome terror of admitting that an atheistic society can teach us anything.

I'm not suggesting that Mr Davies shares these misunderstandings, but I think that folk are encouraged in them by his "rubbing-in" of the relative failure of man's civilizing endeavours to the neglect of their relative success. Hence my insistence that "whatever man's historical and social achievements . . . his life consisteth not in the abundance of his . . . social possessions."

NOTE

THE issue of THEOLOGY for November, 1941, is missing at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. All available copies were sold. Anyone who has a copy of that number, which he is able and willing to dispose of, is asked to communicate with the Librarian. While we are making mention of such a matter, may we add that the Warden of St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, has for years been trying to obtain copies of the first two numbers of *Christendom—i.e.*, March and June, 1931, vol. i, Nos. 1 and 2—in order to complete the set in the Library, and that he has not yet succeeded?

Printed in Great Britain by
Billing and Sons Ltd, Guildford and Esher